



Radio Free Europe: An Insider's View

J. F. Brown

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This is the story of the critical role played by Radio Free Europe during the Cold War, as recounted by veteran RFE official J. F. Brown, who served as director from 1978 to 1983. Jim Brown had written about Eastern Europe from RFE, but never about RFE until he wrote this book. He conveys his understanding of how Radio Free Europe functioned as a decentralized organization that empowered exiles, while also conveying what it, and they, could and could not offer East European listeners. Jim Brown's explanations of the function of the central news department as an internal news agency, of discussions with and trust of exile broadcast chiefs, of RFE's cautious approach to broadcasting to Poland under martial law after 1981 to cite only three examples from the book illuminate the editorial policies and internal relationships that made RFE a success. His portraits of key personalities over the years help us understand that RFE was not just an institution; it was a unique multinational group of people. (From the "Foreword" by A. Ross Johnson). "The historical analysis Brown brings is extremely valuable and adds the insight of a first rate analyst to such topics as the contrast between how RFE handled the Hungarian and Polish events of the 1950s, the 'Czech spring' in 1968, the Gomulka period in Poland, the developing independence of Ceausescu's Romania, etc. All are given perceptive treatment." Eugene R. Parta, author with A. Ross Johnson of Cold War Broadcasting: Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. A Collection of Studies and Documents. "I know of no other books on RFE by an insider who had so much experience with the Radios and how they were operated. [It is] very well written, well organized, and a fascinating read." -Yale Richmond, cultural affairs officer, U.S. Foreign Service (ret.), author of Practicing Public Diplomacy: A Cold War Odyssey.

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